

Appl. No.: 10/751,384  
Amdt.dated 02/24/2006  
Response to Office Action of August 25, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims according to the following list of claims, wherein changes are indicated relative to the immediately prior version of the claims.

1. (currently amended) An accessory device for use with a medical apparatus in which fluid is drawn from or expelled into a patient through a hollow needle, said device comprising:
  - an elongated hollow body;
  - a needle connected to said hollow body;
  - a sleeve surrounding said needle, said sleeve reciprocally, movably associated with said hollow body for movement into and out of said hollow body to thereby expose more or less of the length of said needle, said sleeve having a first position wherein said sleeve covers the major portion of the length of said needle but does not cover the entire needle, a second position wherein a sufficient portion of the length of said needle is exposed so that it is available for use in a medical procedure, and a third position wherein said sleeve covers said entire needle and is locked in position to prevent exposure of any part of said needle; and
    - one of said sleeve and said hollow body including a track and the other of said sleeve and said hollow body including a stop member, said stop member operatively guidedly associated with said track whereby said sleeve can automatically move from said first position to said second position and thereafter to said third position upon insertion of said needle into a patient and said stop member automatically permanently locks said sleeve in said third position upon withdrawal of said needle from a patient.
2. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein said stop member comprises a flexible member.
3. (original) The device according to claim 2 wherein said sleeve includes said flexible member.

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4. (original) The device according to claim 2 wherein said sleeve includes a plurality of flexible members.

5. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 wherein said hollow body includes a plurality of tracks.

6. (original) The device according to claim 2 wherein said flexible member includes a projection which engages with said track whereby said track guides said flexible member.

7. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 wherein said track includes a first portion to permit said sleeve to move from said first position to said second position, and a second portion to permit said sleeve to move from said second position to said third position.

8. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 wherein said hollow body includes a stop, said flexible stop member engaging said stop when said sleeve reaches said third position.

9. (currently amended) The device according to claim 2 wherein said hollow body defines a central axis and said flexible member can move radially inwardly and outwardly relative to the central axis of said longitudinal hollow body.

10. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 further comprising a biasing spring that biases for biasing said sleeve toward into said third first position.

11. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 further including a collar operatively associated with said hollow body and sleeve for preventing said sleeve from becoming disassociated with said hollow body.

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12. (currently amended) An accessory device for use with a medical apparatus in which fluid is drawn from or expelled into a patient through a hollow needle, said device comprising:  
an elongated hollow body;  
a needle connected to said hollow body;  
a sleeve surrounding said needle, said sleeve reciprocally movably associated with said hollow body for movement into and out of said hollow body to thereby expose more or less of the length of said needle, said sleeve having a first position wherein said sleeve covers a major portion [[of]], but not the entire length, of said needle, a second position wherein a sufficient portion of the length of said needle is exposed and available for use in a medical procedure, and a third position wherein said sleeve covers said entire needle and is locked in position to prevent exposure of any part of said needle; and  
said sleeve including a flexible finger and said hollow body including a track, said flexible finger disposed within said hollow body and operatively guidedly associated with said track whereby said sleeve can automatically move from said first position to said second position and thereafter to said third position upon insertion of said needle into a patient and said flexible finger remains disposed within said hollow body and locks said sleeve in said third position upon withdrawal of said needle from a patient.

13. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 wherein said sleeve includes a plurality of flexible fingers and wherein said hollow body includes a plurality of tracks.

14. (original) The device according to claim 12 wherein said flexible finger includes a projection which engages with said track whereby said track guides said flexible finger.

15. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 wherein said track includes a first portion to permit said sleeve to move from said first position to said second position, and a second portion to permit said sleeve to move from said second position to said third position.

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16. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 wherein said hollow body includes a stop, and said flexible finger engages said stop when said sleeve reaches said third position.

17. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 wherein said hollow body defines a central axis and wherein said flexible finger can move radially inwardly and outwardly relative to the central axis of said longitudinal hollow body.

18. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 further comprising a biasing spring that biases for biasing said sleeve toward into said third first position.

19. (currently amended) The device according to claim 12 further including a collar operatively associated with said hollow body and sleeve for preventing said sleeve from becoming disassociated with said hollow body.

20. (new) An accessory device for use with a medical apparatus in which fluid is drawn from or expelled into a patient through a hollow needle, said device comprising:

an elongated hollow body;

a needle connected to said hollow body;

a sleeve surrounding said needle, said sleeve reciprocally movably associated with said hollow body for movement into and out of said hollow body to thereby expose more or less of the length of said needle, said sleeve having a first position wherein said sleeve covers a major portion, but not the entire length, of said needle, a second position wherein a sufficient portion of the length of said needle is exposed and available for use in a medical procedure, and a third position wherein said sleeve covers said entire needle and is locked in position to prevent exposure of any part of said needle; and

said sleeve including a plurality of flexible fingers and said body including a track, said flexible fingers disposed within said hollow body and at least one of said flexible fingers being operatively guidedly associated with said track whereby said sleeve automatically moves from said first position to said second position solely by application of force axially upon said sleeve

upon insertion of said needle into a patient and thereafter automatically moves to said third position upon withdrawal of said needle from the patient, said hollow body defining a stop surface disposed internally within said hollow body, and said hollow body and flexible fingers being structured and arranged such that at least one of said flexible fingers engages said stop surface within said hollow body when said sleeve is moved to the third position so as to lock said sleeve in said third position upon withdrawal of said needle from a patient.

21. (new) A medical device for use in transacting a substance through the skin or a tissue of a patient, the medical device comprising:

a hollow body having a proximal end and a distal end;

a needle having a fixed end connected to the proximal end of said hollow body and a free end extending from the distal end of said hollow body, the free end for insertion through the skin or tissue of a patient;

a sleeve telescopically engaged with said hollow body and capable of moving from a first position to a second position range relative to said hollow body, and capable of moving from the second position range to a third position relative to said hollow body, wherein the free end of said needle is exposed when said sleeve is disposed in the first position, wherein a variable portion of said needle from the free end toward the fixed end thereof is exposed when said needle is disposed in the second position range, and wherein the free end of said needle is covered by said sleeve when said sleeve reaches the third position;

a track defined by either one of said hollow body and said sleeve;

a projection attached to the other of said hollow body and said sleeve, said projection engaged with said track and automatically guiding movement of said sleeve from the first position to the second position range when said needle is inserted through the skin or tissue of a patient, and automatically guiding movement of said sleeve from the second position range to the third position when said needle is subsequently withdrawn from the skin or tissue; and

a flexible member attached to either of said hollow body and said sleeve, said flexible member disposed within and covered by said hollow body, said flexible member automatically and permanently locking said sleeve into the third position upon said sleeve reaching the third position.